

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 01631 301357Z

46

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-02 SPC-03

STR-08 TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /211 W
----- 125427

R 301245Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7313

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EAGR, PINT, BU

SUBJECT: BCP PLENUM ON AGRICULTURE HELD

REF: (A) SOFIA 903; (B) A-201, NOVEMBER 5, 1973

1. PRESS HAS ANNOUNCED THAT BCP HELD PLENUM NOVEMBER 28-29 TO DEAL WITH QUESTION OF "RAISING LEVEL OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TO MEET CURRENT NEEDS". MAIN PLENUM ADDRESS GIVEN BY BCP SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF AGRICULTURE, IVAN PRUMOV, AND CONCLUDING REMARKS DELIVERED BY PARTY FIRST SECRETARY ZHIVKOV. PLENUM WAS ENLARGED SESSION AND INCLUDED DIRECTORS OF STATE ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES, CHAIRMEN OF AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES, AND REGIONAL

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PAGE 02 SOFIA 01631 301357Z

PARTY WORKERS CONCERNED WITH AGRICULTURE. ACCORDING

TO PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT, PLENUM ADOPTED DECISION WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED IN "NEXT FEW DAYS".

2. COMMENT: PLENUM DEVOTED TO AGRICULTURAL POLICY IS LONG OVERDUE AND WAS EXPECTED AS EARLY AS 1971 WHEN ZHIVKOV PROMULGATED CONCEPT OF AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES. FACT THAT PLENUM HAS BEEN SO OFTEN POSTPONED HAS LED MOST OBSERVERS HERE TO CONCLUDE THAT ZHIVKOV'S AGRICULTURAL POLICIES HAVE BEEN SUBJECT OF STRONG DEBATE WITHIN PARTY AND PERHAPS BY WARSAW PACT ALLIES, AS WELL, WHO RESENT HAVING TO BEAR SOME ECONOMIC COSTS TO SUPPORT BULGARIAN GROWTH. ON THE ONE HAND AMALGAMATION OF AGRICULTURE INTO LESS THAN 160 ECONOMIC UNITS HAS NO DOUBT PRODUCED SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DISLOCATION. SOME ADVERSE ECONOMIC RESULTS HAVE FOLLOWED, AS EVIDENCED BY CONTINUING SHORTFALLS IN MEAT AND DIARY PRODUCTION, AS WELL AS THIS YEAR'S POOR HARVESTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR DOMESTIC MARKET. MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR THESE FAILURES, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN LAID TO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WHICH HAS RECENTLY SEEN TOP LEVEL PERSONNEL CHANGES (REFTEL B).

3. TO BALANCE THIS, HOWEVER, THIS YEAR'S CROPS, WHILE PROBABLY NOT EQUAL TO LAST YEAR'S RECORD HARVEST, HAVE BEEN GOOD, PARTICULARLY GRAINS, AND WOULD PRESUMABLY AID ZHIVKOV (IF, INDEED, HE NEEDS ASSISTANCE) TO PUSH THROUGH AGRO-INDUSTRIAL IDEA TO SECOND PHASE. ACCORDING TO LOCAL ECONOMISTS, SECOND PHASE OF PROGRAM WOULD SEE CLOSER AMALGAMATION OF AGRICULTURAL UNITS WITH ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES TO PRODUCE FULL SCALE INTEGRATION OF AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY, AS HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE IN SUGAR PRODUCTION.

4. TWO VACANCIES ON POLITBURO (RESULTING FROM DEATH OF BULGARANOV IN JANUARY AND OUSTER OF TSANEV IN JULY) REMAIN UNFILLED. THERE HAD BEEN SOME EXPECTATION THAT CONTINUING MYSTERY OF BORIS VELCHEV'S STATUS WOULD BE RESOLVED AT NEXT PLENUM BUT HIS AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT INJURIES PROVIDE ADEQUATE EXCUSE FOR PUTTING OFF A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SOFIA 01631 301357Z

DECISION AT THIS TIME. RELUCTANCE TO MAKE PERSONNEL SHIFTS MAY BE SLIGHT INDICATION THAT ZHIVKOV CONTINUES TO RULE BY CAREFUL BALANCE OF POWER AND IS UNWILLING AT THIS POINT TO RISK STRAINS NEW APPOINTMENTS MIGHT PRODUCE.

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